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PRESS RELEASE

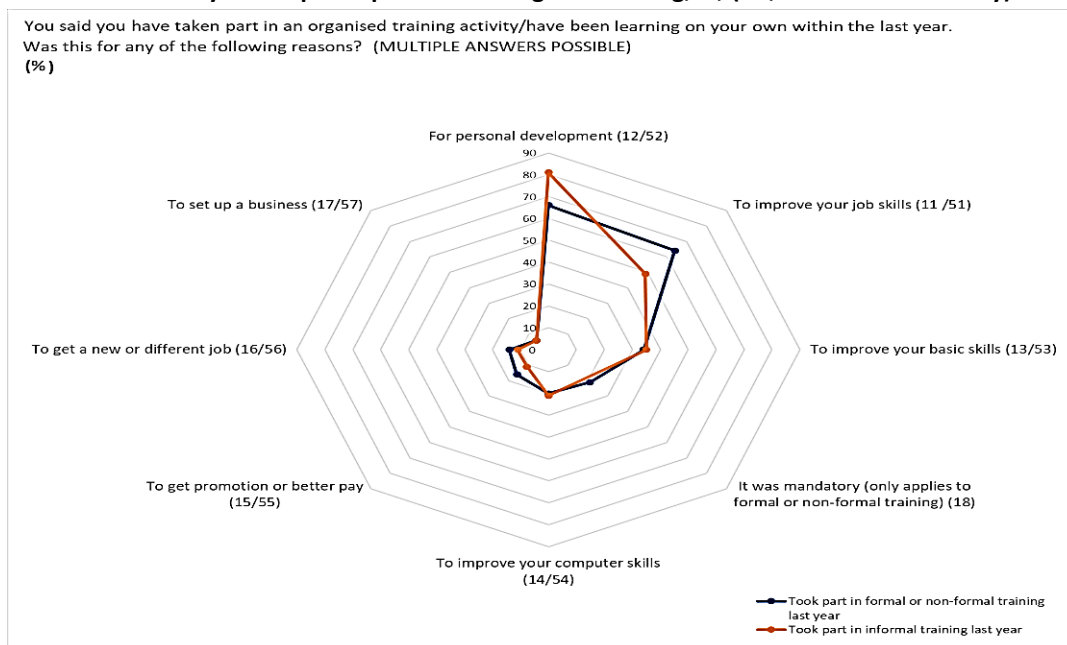
A more learner-centred approach to adult learning may encourage more to participate – Cedefop opinion survey

Adults in Europe regard learning and training as very important and associate them with strong employment-related and personal benefits, according to [a survey](#) carried out by Cedefop. The survey also clearly shows that adults expect learning and training to become more important in the future, with an overwhelming majority agreeing that governments should prioritise investment in them.

A lack of ‘attractiveness’ was thought to be a reason why Europe consistently failed to reach its participation target; the target was 15% by 2020, but the level achieved was around 11%.

Adults participate in learning and training to make progress in their careers, to improve specific skills and for personal development (Figure). However, although 64% of adults working in elementary occupations and 94% of professionals said that their job requires them to keep their skills constantly up to date, most adults said they do not participate in learning and training because they ‘have no need’. In some cases, it seems, lacking skills is not a strong enough reason for adults to take part in learning and training.

Reasons why adults participate in learning and training; %, (EU, Iceland and Norway)



Source: Cedefop, 2020.

Motivation to participate, regardless of age, education level and occupation, seems linked to receiving some benefit within a reasonable time. For example, many young adults prefer to enter the labour market after university because graduates are more likely to find better jobs with higher pay and status. However, decisions on who benefits from taking part in adult learning and training are usually made by an employer, not the participant. If benefits are not realised in an acceptable timetable, then other career and personal matters may take priority over learning and training.

As well as possible benefits, decisions to participate in learning also appear to depend on individual circumstances. People are likely to need and benefit from learning and training during labour market 'transitions', for example when looking for work, or when changes happen at work such as promotion, new tasks or a new location. However, such individual circumstances and needs are personal and unique.

This calls for a more learner-centred approach to adult learning and training that not only tailors learning to individual needs, but also includes combining existing measures that encourage adults to participate. For example, financial support to participate in learning and training, will be more effective in combination with advice and guidance. Through an individual approach, vocational education and training can be seen to support not only equality, but also excellence.

Check out our new report: [More perceptions on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe: Second opinion survey – Volume 2: Views of adults in Europe](#)

Notes to editors

- Cedefop's second opinion survey, published in 2020, provides insights into what Europeans think of adult learning and continuing vocational education and training (CVET). The survey informs policies to make VET a more attractive and effective learning option. It was carried out between May and July 2019 and comprised 40 466 telephone interviews of people aged 25 and over living in the EU, Iceland and Norway. The survey findings are in two volumes. The [first volume](#) looks at Member States, the [second](#) considers the views of demographic and socioeconomic groups across the EU.
- For EU lifelong targets, see [Eurostat lifelong learning](#).

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The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, skills and qualifications.

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